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Historical Geography on a Regional Basis. The British Isles.

With six maps, Vol. I, by Ernest W. Dann, B.A. (Oxon.). pp. vii and 182.
J. M. Dent and Company, London, 1908. (Price, 2s. 6d.)

For easy lessons arranged in series, and short courses to knowledge, there seems to be a never-ending demand. Sometimes it may be the ambitious editor who is responsible for the continuous flow, more often perhaps it is the publisher who is making business. But through all this we are getting on, and the generations on the whole are waxing wiser. Dent's New Series of Mathematical and Scientific Text Books for Schools is thus far in its issue very largely mathematical. It is a novel and a commendable feature to include a volume or volumes (a second on Europe is promised) on Historical Geography. This bears testimony to the interesting fact that Historical Geography as a branch of knowledge is increasing in favour. The volume is merely a beginner's book. In his introductory chapter the author undertakes to present in a general way the relations of Geography and History.

The best treatises on Historical Geography have been written by those who have approached the subject from the standpoint of the historian, that is, have had a thorough training in historical studies and historical methods, rather than by those who have approached it from the standpoint of the physiographer or geologist; and this does not argue that the writer of a work on historical geography should not be a profound student of physiography to be eminently successful in his task. It is the bias of a physiographer which is recorded in such statements as our author makes (p. 2), statements which are striking, but which are not true: "It is not too much to say that—all leading actions of men have their first cause in the nature of the land in which they live." The nature of the land is a factor, and a very important factor, but we should never forget that it is a *factor*. Let us, however, be just in citing from Mr. Dann's work; but admittedly there is confusion of statement. "There is a distinct danger of overrating the effect of environment on man," is a warning recorded on page 25.

To illustrate "physical features and history" a skeleton map is given which the author explains in his chapter II. Recognizing that the British Islands are merely an isolated portion of the continental shelf of Europe, a justification for a treatment such as is here given of regional geography lies in the fact that the author has continually before him "the *historical* aspect of geography." There is a good brief chapter on "Migrations" and how these have been geographically determined. Each of the larger divisions of the region is given consideration as a unit and also in its relations to the whole. What geographically has contributed to the making of a great sea-power very naturally is not overlooked. The book concludes with a word on "Historic Towns" and the scantest reference to "Greater Britain."
E. L. S.

Die Entstehung der Kontinente, der Vulkane und Gebirge. Von P. Osw. Kohler. Pp. 58. Leipzig, Verlag von Wilhelm Engelmann, 1908.

This treatise is a discussion of the "passive plutonists," as the author calls them, who in their hypotheses concerning the origin of the mountains deny all activity of the heated interior and all influence of physical processes in the earth's crust, asserting that the form of the earth's surface arises chiefly from crumbling, sinking, folding and lateral pressure (p. 43).

Three hypotheses in the "passive plutonic" theory he attacks; (1) the basis of the theory, namely, the assumption that the interior of the earth has shrunk

faster than the crust, is false; (2) the notion of a "depth" into which "subsidence-fields" have fallen is unfounded, and no such "depth" has ever existed; (3) the theory that continental "clods" that have refused to sink contradicts all established laws of statics. Two hypotheses, however, of the "passive plutonists" he adopts. (1) There has taken place a cooling of worlds, especially of the earth, and this cooling process is still going on. (2) The interior of the earth is yet much hotter than the exterior. He shows that the exterior must cool off faster, and hence shrink more than the interior, and that fissures are thus best explained which have gradually become filled with deposits and eruptive products. The cause of the various inequalities of the earth's surface, the author finds in "hydrothermal processes." There is going on a constant, though slow, circulation in the earth, especially in its crust, a circulation of heat and water like that of the water in the atmosphere. Volcanoes are, as it were, fountains, for which the "hydrothermal processes" furnish the needful hydrostatic pressure. Most islands and mountains have arisen through many slight and partial upheavals, not by one sudden convulsion. In the last chapter the author discusses the origin of granite and its connection with volcanic formations. E. L. S.

The Mother of California. By Arthur Walbridge North. xi and 169 pp., Illustrations, Maps, Appendix, and Index. Paul Elder & Company, San Francisco and New York. (Price, \$2.)

The conspicuous fact concerning this book is that it is the only work yet published that tells concisely and clearly the remarkable story of Lower California, a great region at our very doors that has been as poorly mapped and as little known as many of the out-of-the-way corners of the world. To perform this useful task Mr. North dug into the Spanish records from first to last and took from them all the facts essential to make a vivid and consecutive narrative of the history of Baja California. He supplemented this work by extended journeys into the peninsula for the study of its geography, its fauna and flora, its human remains, its inhabitants of to-day, its resources of all kinds, and its prospects of development.

The result is that he supplies in a comparatively small book the material required to give to his readers a comprehensive idea of what the great peninsula has been, what it is, and what it may become. He has thus made a very useful contribution to geographical literature. About half of the volume is given to the history of the peninsula and the remainder to a description of the physical, political and social conditions of lower California and its mineral and other resources. The maps are adequate and the other illustrations, from the author's own photographs, are good and striking.

Weltkatastrophen. Betrachtungen über die zukünftigen Schicksale unserer Erdenwelt. Von M. Wilhelm Meyer. 193 pp., Hermann Paetel, Berlin, 1907. (Price, M. 1.50.)

One of a series of small volumes published by Paetel which are designed to present historical and scientific subjects in a way to interest and edify the youth of Germany. Among the topics in this volume (No. 22 of the series) are earthquakes, comets, meteorites, solar radiation, and the future of the earth. These books contain the best results of research and the latest thought in several departments of knowledge, so far as they are adapted for the consideration of young readers.